

Book Reviews

The Western Journal of Medicine does not review all books sent by publishers, although information about new books received is printed elsewhere in the journal as space permits. Prices quoted are those given by the publishers.

THE CIGARETTE UNDERWORLD—Edited by Alan Blum, MD, Editor, *New York State Journal of Medicine*. Lyle Stuart Inc, 120 Enterprise Avenue, Secaucus, NJ 07094, 1985. 128 pages, \$9.95.

Cigarette smoking is generally acknowledged as the most important cause of preventable disease, disability and premature death in the industrialized world. The volume *The Cigarette Underworld* is an important source of information on this problem. It first appeared as a special issue (December 1983) of the *New York State Journal of Medicine*. Dr Alan Blum serves as the editor of the *NYSJM*.

Dr Blum assembled a group of contributors who discuss political, economic, legal, public policy and biomedical issues in an imaginative, hard-hitting fashion. The "business as usual" approach of the large, multinational tobacco companies is analyzed. In particular, the effect of tobacco company diversification and economic clout on media coverage is assessed, and one is left with the sad conclusion that the media's editorial independence has been compromised by these developments. Perhaps a more ominous threat to world health is the pernicious movement of the multinational companies into the relatively underdeveloped markets of the third world. The devastating consequences of increasing tobacco consumption in these areas are described.

This volume contains a wealth of practical information on such issues as physician involvement with smoking cessation and public advocacy programs. Those concerned with promoting clean air acts in local communities will read with interest about the experience in Minnesota, Florida and Illinois. Activities of medical associations and physician groups around the world are detailed as examples of how physicians can and should become involved in dealing with the tobacco problem. The efforts of DOC (Doctors Ought to Care) are cited as creative approaches to countering tobacco advertising campaigns. Dr Blum organized DOC while he was a resident in family practice at the University of Miami School of Medicine in the 1970s.

In summary, because of its unique perspective on the major public health problem of our time, this volume is highly recommended for both physicians and nonphysicians. Dr Blum has succeeded in conveying an air of urgency concerning this problem and has detailed how physicians and other interested parties can help combat the tobacco industry's greedy pursuit of profits.

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COLOR ATLAS OF GERIATRIC MEDICINE—Asif Kamal, MBBS, MRCP, Consultant Physician in Geriatric Medicine, St George's Hospital, Lincoln, and J. C. Brocklehurst, MD, MSc, FRCP, Professor of Geriatric Medicine, University of Manchester, England. Medical Economics Books, Oradell, NJ 07649, 1984. 169 pages, \$59.95.

The *Color Atlas of Geriatric Medicine* is a modest-sized volume that aims to illustrate special features of diagnosis in the elderly. The book opens with three short general chapters which include an introduction to the specialty of geriatrics, special features of illness in old age and assessment of the elderly patient. These chapters, while well written, are brief and superficial in their coverage. The first describes the field of geriatrics as it is practiced in Great Britain, and the structure of services will not be directly applicable to programs in the United States, though they provide a useful model.

The remainder of the book is composed of illustrated sections organized by anatomical areas. Each section includes color photographs demonstrating physical findings, and a variety of additional illustrations, including photographs of hematological slides, x-ray films, nuclear medicine scans, pathological specimens, diagrams and drawings. Each item has a brief descriptive caption. The text in these sections is limited to outline form listings of differential diagnoses, clinical features or pathophysiological mechanisms of the entities depicted. Most of the text is presented as tables.

The atlas contains an impressive array of photos of physical findings which would be quite useful to teaching clinicians. There is considerable overlap with general internal medicine, which is understandable given the nature of the field. However, there is pronounced variability in the type of illustrations chosen for different sections. For example, in the chapter on the head and neck, there are four photos of hearing aid devices but none of visual aids or dentures. The chapter on the lower extremity likewise does not depict assistive devices for ambulation. This inconsistency signals a lack of clear-cut overall purpose for the book.

There is a final chapter on hypothermia in the elderly which has an expanded text compared with the others. While hypothermia is a common problem in Great Britain, there are no other chapters on individual clinical syndromes and its presence again disrupts the organization of the book.

Due to its brevity, the Atlas fails in its stated purpose as a "comprehensive introduction to geriatric medicine." A more consistent approach from section to section, with greater restriction to physical diagnosis and topics quintessentially geriatric, would make the volume more cohesive. It would be a useful adjunct to more in-depth texts in the teachings of geriatric medicine to students and clinicians.

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TECHNOLOGY OF NUCLEAR MAGNETIC RESONANCE—Edited by Peter D. Esser, PhD, Department of Nuclear Medicine, College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, and R. Eugene Johnston, PhD, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. The Society of Nuclear Medicine, Inc, 475 Park Ave South, New York, NY 10016, 1984. 257 pages, \$29.00 (paperback).

Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) is, by far, the most complex technology yet to be applied in clinical medicine. This small, multiauthor volume attempts to shed light on the topic so that physicians not conversant with the subject can at least get a foot in the door of this fascinating field. It may be impossible for a NMR expert to explain the field to a novice. In all of its ramifications NMR is, and will probably remain, beyond the grasp of any one person.

This volume reflects what is probably too great a gap between author and reader. This should not be taken as excessively critical of this particular book because no one else has succeeded in making NMR comprehensible either.

There is a great deal of useful material presented here and available to those prepared to plow through the book. It presents a variety of topics in the area the title defines, and is divided into five sections: (1) overview, (2) pulse sequences and parameter extraction, (3) flow and motion, (4) new techniques and (5) installation considerations.

Only the first section requires advanced mathematical ability and much of this section is clearly written. The remainder of the volume contains practical information that will be of interest to anyone entering this dazzling field.

There are obvious practical limitations in this volume. It has been printed from "photo ready" typescript. This speeds publication but is less easily read. An index would have greatly strengthened the volume and its absence forces one to forage through the book. There are many pithy and useful facts buried in it.

This volume succeeds as well as any yet published in clarifying the NMR phenomenon as it applies to medicine. It is up-to-date—an important consideration in this rapidly changing field.

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